

Unit 5: Historical Overview--Belarus

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will

Be aware of the following

- Early Belarussian control by Lithuania (1240 onwards)
- Influence of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox religious practice in historic Belarus
- Partitions (divisions) of Poland (1772-95) by Russia, Prussia and Austria which included the region of present day Belarus
- Devastating impact of World War I on the Belarussian region
- Political persecutions experienced by Belarussian peoples under Stalin in the 1930s
- Destruction experienced by Belarus during World War II under Russian and German occupation
- Current political ties between Belarussia and Russia

Identify

- Polatsk, Belarussian SSR
- Polonize, Treaty of Riga (1921)
- Uniate, New Economic Policy-NEP (1921-28)
- Union of Brest, Collectivization
- Reunification, Stalinization
- Kastus Kalinowski, Cultural Chernobyl
- CIS, Alma-Ata Declaration

Realize

- Eras of migration of peoples from the historic Belarus region
- Damaging effect of Stalin's purges after World War II
- Heavy-handedness of Khrushchev's policies on Belarussian cultural identity
- Steps leading to independence of Belarussia

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1. Early History

a. Origins "Belarus's origins can be traced from the emergence in the late ninth century A.D. of Kievan Rus', the first East Slavic state. After the death of its ruler, Prince Yaroslav the Wise, in 1054, Kievan Rus' split into a number of principalities, each centered on a city. One, Polatsk (PAH-lahtsk, located 120 miles north northeast of Minsk, [Polotsk in Russian]), became the nucleus of modern-day Belarus" (Unless stated otherwise, the following quotes come from Library of Congress Country Study--Belarus, 29 Sep 1995).

b. Lithuanian Control "In 1240, after the Tatar overthrow of Kiev, the dominant principality of Kievan Rus', Belorussia (bye-loh-RAH-shahn) and part of Ukraine came under the control of Lithuania.

The resulting state was called the Grand Duchy (DUCH-ee) of Lithuania, Rus', and Samogitia (sa-mah-JI-shah). Because territories inhabited by East Slavs made up about 90 percent of the Grand Duchy, they exerted a great cultural influence on the new state.



Official business was conducted in a Slavic language (a predecessor of both Belorussian and Ukrainian, a liturgical language of Orthodox and Uniate churches in Slavic lands) based on Old Church Slavonic, and the law code was based on that of Kievan Rus'."

2. Polish and Catholic Impact

a. Roman Catholic Church "The Union of Krevo (1385), which joined Poland and the Grand Duchy in a confederation, hinged on Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila's conversion from paganism to Roman Catholicism and his subsequent marriage to twelve-year-old Queen Jadwiga of Poland. Thus he became Wladyslaw II Jagiello (valh-DIS-lahf yahg-YEL-loh), king of Poland.

Poland and Lithuania were later united into a single state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, by the Union of Lublin (1569).

When Roman Catholicism became the official religion of Lithuania shortly after Jagiello's conversion, the Lithuanian and Belorussian nobility began converting from Orthodoxy to Catholicism and assimilating Polish culture (including the language), a process accelerated by the Union of Lublin. As a result, the Belorussian peasantry was ruled by those who shared neither their language nor its religion, Eastern Orthodoxy."

b. Uniate Catholic Church "The Union of Brest (1596), which united the Roman Catholic Church with the part of the Orthodox Church that was within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was viewed favorably by both the Polish king, Sigismund Vasa III (ZIG-moont VAH-sah), and a number of Orthodox bishops, clergy, and faithful.

The new Uniate Church acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman Catholic pope and accepted articles of Roman Catholic religious doctrine. In return, the Uniate Church retained its traditional Orthodox rites and customs as well as a measure of autonomy in non-doctrinal matters; it was also given the same rights and privileges as the Roman Catholic Church.



However, fear of the new church's becoming Latinized and Polonized (process of changing national identity of non-Poles to a culture similar to that of Polish peoples) caused many of the Orthodox faithful to reject the union, and the Orthodox Church continued to exist alongside the Uniate Church in an often bitter struggle.

In the aftermath of the Union of Brest, both civil and religious authorities persecuted the Orthodox Church and supported the Uniates in their takeover of Orthodox property. Social conditions deteriorated, there was a large-scale revolt against Polish landowners in 1648-54 (coinciding with the Khmel'nyts'kyi [chmyel-NYIT-skee, name of Cossack leader who revolted against Poland in 1648] rebellion in Ukraine), and many Belorussians fled to the Ukrainian steppes to join the Cossacks. There was little economic development in Belorussian lands, and the vast majority of the Belorussian population lived on subsistence agriculture."

3. The Divisions of Poland

a. Russia, Prussia, and Austria divisions, 1772-95 "Belorussia remained a part of Poland until Russia, Prussia, and Austria carried out the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795. After the last partition, the entire territory of Belorussia found itself part of the Russian Empire, with the

exception of a small piece of land in the west, which was held by Prussia."

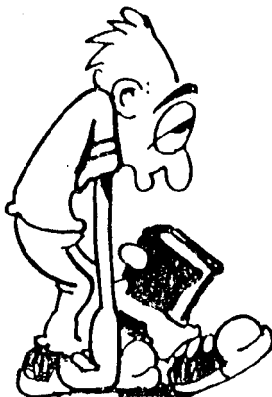
b. Uniate suppression

"Orthodox Russia tolerated the Uniate Church to a certain degree, but in 1839, when three-quarters of all Belorussians were Uniates, Tsar Nicholas I (with the support of the Russian Orthodox Church) abolished the Uniate Church and forced the Uniates to reconvert to Orthodoxy.



He also banned the use of the name "Belorussia" and replaced it with the name "Northwest Territory" (Severo-zapadnyy kray, in Russian). Overall, the state pursued a policy of Russification (process of changing national identity of non-Russians to one similar to that of the Russians)."

c. Peasant woes "At the time serfdom was abolished in the Russian Empire in 1861, Belorussia was essentially a nation of peasants and landlords.



Although they had their freedom, the peasants had little else: they remained poor and largely landless. The imposition of the Russian language, the Orthodox religion, heavy taxes, and military service lasting twenty-five years made the past under Polish rule seem better than the present under the tsars."

4. Early Belorussian Nationalism

a. Kalinowski "It was those memories that Kastus Kalinowski (1838-64) tried to evoke in his clandestine newspaper *Muzhytskaya Prawda* (Peasants' Truth), which he published to inspire an uprising in

solidarity with the Polish-Lithuanian insurrection against Russia in January 1863.

The insurrection failed, and the Polish territories and people were absorbed directly into the Russian Empire. Kalinowski, today considered the founding father of Belorussian nationalism, was hanged in Vilnius (VIL-nee-ahs, 100 miles west northwest of Minsk, present day capital of Lithuania)."

b. Emigration (1870-1920) "Despite the industrial development that took place in Belorussia during the 1880s and 1890s, unemployment and poverty were widespread, giving impetus to large-scale migrations. In the fifty years leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution, almost 1.5 million persons emigrated from Belorussia to the United States and to Siberia."

c. Cultural Rebirth 1906-18
"Following the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905, strikes and peasant disorders erupted throughout the Russian Empire; to stem the unrest the tsar granted, and then extended, civil liberties. Russian authorities were forced to relax their repressive policies on non-Russian ethnic groups, prompting a national and cultural flowering in Belorussia."

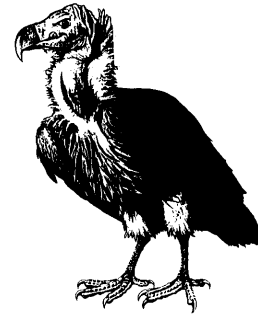


The ban on the Belorussian language (and other non-Russian languages) was lifted, although there were still restrictions on its use; education was expanded, and peasants began to attend school for the first time; Belorussian writers published classics of modern Belorussian literature; and the weekly newspaper Nasha Niva (Our Cornfield), published by the Belorussian Socialist Party, lent the name 'nashanivism' to this period (1906-18) of Belorussian history."

5. World War and Revolution

a. World War I "The outbreak of World War I in 1914 turned Belorussia into a zone of strict martial law, military operations, and great destruction. Large German and Russian armies fought fiercely and caused the expulsion or departure of more than 1 million civilians from the country.

The Russian government's inept war efforts and ineffective economic policies prompted high food prices, shortages of goods, and many needless deaths in the war. Discontent in the cities and the countryside spread, leading to strikes, riots, and the eventual downfall of the tsarist government."



b. 1917 Revolutions "The two revolutions of 1917--the February Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution--gave nationally conscious Belorussians an opportunity to advance their political cause.

Bolshevism did not have many followers among the natives of Belorussia; instead, local political life was dominated by the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the Mensheviks (group advocating parliamentary, gradual socialism rather than violent overthrow like the Bolsheviks), the Bund (Jewish Socialist movement), and various Christian movements in which the clergy of both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Polish Catholic Church played significant roles.

The Belorussian political cause was represented by the Belorussian Socialist Party, the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the Leninist Social Democratic Party, and various nationalist groups advocating moderate forms of socialism."



c. Belorussian SSR "In December 1917, more than 1,900 delegates to the All-Belorussian Congress (Rada) met in Minsk to establish a democratic republican government in Belorussia, but Bolshevik soldiers disbanded the assembly before it had finished its deliberations.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 put most of Belorussia under German control, but on March 25, 1918, the Central Executive Committee of the Rada nullified the treaty and proclaimed the independence of the Belorussian National Republic. Later that year, the German government, which had guaranteed the new state's independence, collapsed, and the new republic was unable to resist Belorussian Bolsheviks supported by the Bolshevik government in Moscow. The Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (Belorussian SSR) was established on January 1, 1919, by force of arms."

d. Treaty of Riga "For the next two years, Belorussia was a prize in the Polish-Soviet War, a conflict settled by the Treaty of Riga (REE-gah, seaport capital of present day Latvia) in March 1921. Under the terms of the treaty, Belorussia was divided into three parts:



(1) The western portion, which was absorbed into Poland

(2) Central Belorussia, which formed the Belorussian SSR

(3) Eastern portion, which became part of Russia.

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The Belorussian SSR was incorporated into the Soviet Union when the Soviet Union was founded in December 1922.

The territory of the Belorussian SSR was enlarged in both 1924 and 1926 by the addition of Belorussian ethnographic regions that had become part of Russia under the Treaty of Riga. The area of the republic was expanded from its original post-treaty size of 51,800 square kilometers to 124,320 square kilometers, and the population increased from 1.5 million to almost 5 million persons."

e. New Economic Policy 1921-28

"The New Economic Policy (NEP, program allowing private ownership of small enterprises), established by Vladimir I. Lenin in 1921 as a temporary compromise with capitalism, stimulated economic recovery in the Soviet Union, and by the mid-1920s agricultural and industrial output in Belorussia had reached 1913 levels.

Historically, Belorussia had been a country of landlords with large holdings, but after the Bolshevik Revolution, these landlords were replaced by middle-class landholders; farm collectives were practically nonexistent.



When forced collectivization (Stalin's policy of consolidating farms and families into large collective state farms) and confiscation began in 1928, there was strong resistance, for which the peasantry paid a high social price: peasants were allowed to starve in some areas, and so-called troublemakers were deported to Siberia. Because peasants slaughtered their livestock rather than turn it over to collective farms, agriculture suffered serious setbacks.

However, the rapid industrialization that accompanied forced collectivization enabled the Moscow government to develop new heavy industry in Belarus quickly."

f. Stalinization "During the period of the NEP, the Soviet government relaxed its cultural restrictions, and Belorussian language and culture flourished. But in the 1930s, when Stalin was fully in power, Moscow's attitude changed, and it became important to Moscow to bind both Belorussia and its economy as closely to the Soviet Union as possible.

Once again, this meant Russification of the people and the culture. The Belorussian language was reformed to bring it closer to the Russian language, and history books were rewritten to show that the Belorussian people had strived to be united with Russia throughout their history. Political persecutions in the 1930s reached genocidal proportions, causing population losses as great as would occur during World War II--more than 2 million persons."

6. Belorussian Territory under Poland

a. Early liberties "Belorussian territory under Poland experienced its own drama. The new Polish state, where ethnic minorities, including Belorussians, Ukrainians, Jews, and Germans, made up one-third of the country's population, began as a democracy.



The country's 3.5 million Belorussians were able to open their own primary schools, high schools, and teachers' colleges; the government supported cultural activities; and Belorussians elected three senators and eleven deputies to the Polish parliament, or Sejm, in 1922."

b. Suppression

(1) Overview "By 1924, however, Poland's policy toward ethnic minorities had changed drastically.

Under the guise of combating communism, most Belorussian schools were closed, and publications in the Belorussian language were banned. The government encouraged ethnic Poles to settle in the Belorussian region, but at the same time it neglected the overall economic development of the area.

The Belorussian region became an agricultural appendage to a more industrialized Poland, and unemployment and land hunger were widespread. Between 1925 and 1938, some 78,000 people emigrated from this part of Poland in search of work, mainly to France and Latin America."

(2) Polish imposition "In May 1926, [Polish] war hero Marshal Jozef Pilsudski (pel-SOOT-skee, 1867-1935) established an authoritarian regime in Poland. The following year, when the Belorussian Peasant-and-Workers' Union spearheaded a widespread protest against the government's oppressive policies in the Belorussian region, the regime arrested and imprisoned the union's activists. Further governmental policies toward the so-called Eastern Territories (the official name for the Belorussian and Ukrainian regions) were aimed at imposing a Polish and Roman Catholic character on the region."

(3) Ethnic persecution "In 1935 Poland declared that it would no longer be bound by the League of Nations treaty on ethnic minorities, arguing that its own laws were adequate.



That same year, many Belorussians in Poland who opposed the government's policies were placed in a concentration camp at Byaroza-Kartuzski (Bereza Kartuska, in Polish).

The Belorussians lost their last seat in the Polish Sejm in the general elections of 1935, and the

legislation that guaranteed the right of minority communities to have their own schools was repealed in November 1938. The state then involved itself more deeply in religion by attempting to Polonize the Orthodox Church and subordinate it to the government."

7. World War II

a. Soviet harshness 1935-41

"Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939. Two-and-one-half weeks later, Soviet troops moved into the western portions of Belorussia and Ukraine. Ignorant of, or disbelieving the existence of, mass persecutions under Stalin, most Belorussians welcomed the Red Army, only to learn quickly of the harsh reality of communism.



Arrests and deportations were common, and the so-called flourishing of national culture was strictly circumscribed by the ideological and political goals of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. About 300,000 persons were deported from western Belorussia to Soviet labor camps between September 1939 and June 1941, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union."

b. German designs "In June 1941, when German tanks swept through Belorussia toward Moscow, many Belorussians actually welcomed the Nazis, thinking that they would free the Belorussian people from their communist oppression.

However, the Nazis' designs for the occupied territories became known soon enough: Germanizing and assimilating 25 percent of the Belorussians and either ousting or destroying the remaining 75 percent; parceling out Belorussian territory to the Lithuanian and Ukrainian administrative divisions and to East Prussia, while making the central part of Belorussia the Weissruthenische Generalbezirk (Belorussian Military District); and placing the eastern portion of Belorussia under the German military regime."

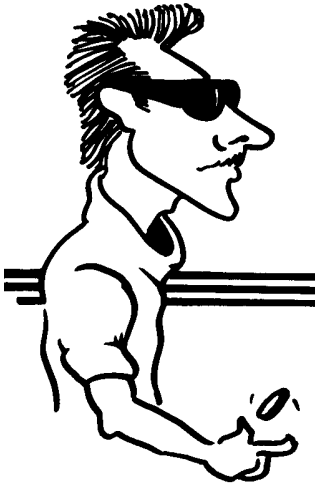
c. German occupation 1941-44

(1) Devastation "Although the front was far to the east, military operations continued within Belorussia.



During the three years of Nazi occupation, enormous devastation was caused by guerrilla warfare, retaliatory burnings of entire villages by the occupiers, mass executions of the Jewish population, and two movements of the front through the area. More than 2 million lives were lost and more than 1 million buildings destroyed. An American observer, after six months of travel across Belorussia, called it 'the most devastated territory in the world.' Major cities, such as Minsk and Vitsyebsk (VEET-syipsk, [Vitebsk, in Russian]), were in ruins."

(2) Nationalism "One of the political consequences of the German occupation was an upsurge of Belorussian nationalism, which the German authorities used for their own ends. Once the Red Army and Soviet administrators fled Belorussia ahead of the Nazis, Belorussians began to organize their own police forces and administration, which the Nazis encouraged. Belorussians living in Belorussia were assisted by Belorussian anti-Communist political refugees who were permitted to return from Germany.



The Nazis permitted the Union of Belorussian Youth to organize in mid-1943; the Belorussian Central Council (BCC) was formed as a self-governing auxiliary body in December 1943; the BCC mobilized a Belorussian Land Defense force in March 1944; and the All-Belorussian Congress was permitted to meet in Minsk to rally resistance to the Russian communists in 1944. However, none of those measures changed the negative attitude of the Belorussians toward the brutal occupation regime."

(3) Deportations "When the eastern front began moving westward, many Belorussians had to choose between two evils: life with the Soviets or departure into exile with the Nazis. Many Belorussians decided to flee, and tens of thousands of them found themselves in Germany and Austria toward the end of World War II. Some of those who had been deported as forced laborers to Germany agreed to go back to Belorussia, only to be redeported by the communists to Siberia or other remote places in the Soviet Union. All those who fled voluntarily to the West eventually settled in Germany, other West European countries, or overseas."

8. Stalin and Russification

a. Stalin purges 1945 "But the country's misery did not end in the summer of 1944, when the Red Army "liberated" it from the Nazis.



Stalin ordered sweeping purges and mass deportations of local administrators and members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), as well as those who had collaborated with the Nazis in any way, those who had spent the war in slave labor and prison camps in Germany and were now 'ideologically contaminated' in Stalin's view, those who were suspected of anti-Soviet sentiments, and those who were

accused of 'bourgeois nationalism.' Only in 1971 did the Belorussian SSR return to its pre-World War II population level, but without its large Jewish populace."

b. Wartime loss "The wartime devastation of Belorussia--the loss of people, homes, animals, public buildings, educational and cultural resources, roads, communications, health care facilities, and the entire industrial base--was complete. To make up for the industrial loss, Stalin ordered the building of new factories and plants, more efficient than most of those elsewhere in the Soviet Union."

c. Russification "One of the devices Stalin used to 'protect' Belorussia (and the rest of the Soviet Union) against possible Western influences was a program of intensive Russification, thus creating a cordon sanitaire for Russia along the Polish border. Consequently, most key positions in Minsk, as well as in the western provincial cities of Hrodna (CHRAD-nah, Grodno, in Russian) and Brest, were filled by Russians sent from elsewhere in the Soviet Union."

The Belorussian language was unofficially banned from official use, educational and cultural institutions, and the mass media, and Belorussian national culture was suppressed by Moscow."



d. Krushchev impositions "This so-called cultural cleansing intensified greatly after 1959, when Nikita S. Khrushchev, the CPSU leader at the time, pronounced in Minsk, 'The sooner we all start speaking Russian, the faster we shall build communism.' The resistance of some students, writers, and intellectuals in Minsk during the 1960s and 1970s was met with harassment by the Committee for State Security (KGB) and firing from jobs rather than arrests. Among the best-known dissidents (persons who disagree with public policy, often at the cost of their own safety) were the writer Vasil' Bykaw, the historian Mykola Prashkovich,

and the worker Mikhal Kukabaka, who spent seventeen years in confinement."

9. Perestroika

a. Chernobyl "The early days of Mikhail S. Gorbachev's perestroika in Belorussia were highlighted by two major events: the Chernobyl disaster of April 26, 1986 (the Belorussian SSR absorbed 70 percent of the radioactive contaminants spewed out by the reactor), and a December 1986 petition sent by twenty-eight intellectuals to Gorbachev expressing the Belorussian people's fundamental grievances in the field of culture ('a cultural Chernobyl').

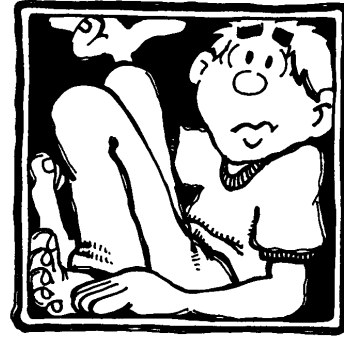
b. "Cultural Chernobyl" "Whereas the full impact of the physical effects of Chernobyl was kept secret for more than three years, the 'cultural Chernobyl' became a subject of hot discussion and an inspiration for considerable political activity.



The petition pleaded with Gorbachev to prevent the 'spiritual extinction' of the Belorussian nation and laid out measures for the introduction of Belorussian as a working language in party, state, and local government bodies and at all levels of education, publishing, mass media, and other fields.

The document embodied the aspirations of a considerable part of the national intelligentsia, who, having received no positive answer from the CPSU leadership either in Moscow or in Minsk, took to the streets. A number of independent youth groups sprang up, many of which embraced the national cause. In July 1988, the Organizational Committee of the Confederation of Belorussian Youth Associations called for 'support of the radical restructuring of Belorussia.'"

c. Stalin's graves "In June 1988, mass graves, allegedly with up to 250,000 of Stalin's victims, were found near Minsk at Kurapaty. This sensational discovery fueled denunciations of the old regime and brought demands for reforms.



An October demonstration, attended by about 10,000 people and dispersed by riot police, commemorated these victims as well as expressing support for the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF), which had been formed earlier in the month in hopes of encouraging reform."

d. Political apathy "The group of activists who called for reform was relatively small; most people, although angry about the graves, remained both attached to Soviet ways and politically apathetic, believing that all these public activities would make no difference in the long run.

The March 4, 1990, elections to the republic's Supreme Soviet illustrated the extent of political apathy and ideological inertia. Of the 360 seats in the legislature, fifteen were unfilled (at least eleven remained so more than a year later); of those elected, 86 percent belonged to the Communist Party of Belorussia (CPB). This conservative majority was not alone in slowing the pace of reforms.

A majority of the republic's population, 83 percent, also voted conservatively in the March 17 all-union referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union, even though the Supreme Soviet of the Belorussian SSR adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic on June 27, 1990 (following the Russian example of some two weeks earlier)."

10. Independent Belarus

a. State sovereignty "Following the August 1991 coup d'etat in Moscow and declarations of independence by Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine, the Supreme Soviet in Minsk declared the independence of Belarus on August 25, 1991, by giving its Declaration of State Sovereignty the status of a constitutional document and renaming the country the Republic of Belarus.

The disorientation that overtook the communists in the wake of the coup was used by liberals and nationalist reformers in various structures to advance their cause..."

b. CIS "Shushkevich's support for the continuation of some kind of union culminated on December 8, 1991, in his signing of the Minsk Agreement, which established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On December 21, eleven former Soviet republics expanded the CIS by issuing the Alma-Ata Declaration. Minsk became the headquarters of the CIS."

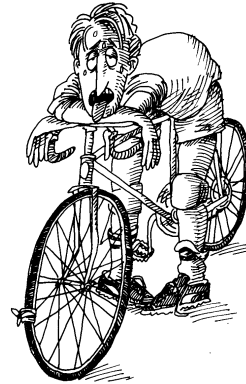
"The Alma-Ata Declaration, signed by eleven heads of state on 21 Dec 1991, expanded membership in the CIS to all other former Soviet republics except Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Moldova joined the CIS in April 1994. The CIS is a confederation of former Soviet republics in which 'coordinating bodies' oversee common interests in the economy, foreign policy, and defense of its members."



c. New constitution "After much negotiation and considerable revision, the Supreme Soviet adopted a new constitution, which went into effect on March 30, 1994. The new document created the office of president, declared Belarus a democracy with separation of powers, granted freedom of religion, and proclaimed Belarus's goal of becoming a neutral, non-nuclear state. The winner of the quickly organized election was Alyaksandr Lukashyenko, whose pro-Russian sentiments and policies seemed destined to unite Belarus with Russia in some way."

11. Tightening of Russian Ties

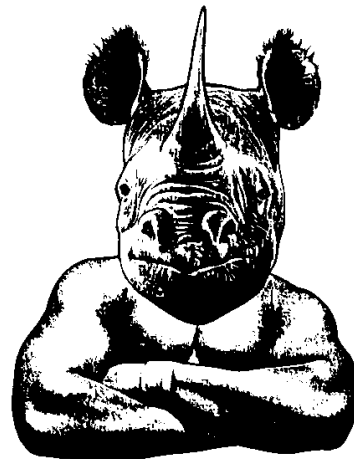
a. Remnants of “Soviet” mentality “Perhaps the most dramatic indication that the Soviet mentality is alive and well in Belarus was the hot-air balloon tragedy in September 1995. A yearly international hot-air balloon race starting in Switzerland included three United States balloons that crossed the border into Belarus.



Although Belarusian authorities had been notified of the race earlier, the Belarusian military fired at one of the balloons, claiming that it did not have any identification and that sensitive military installations were nearby.

The two American pilots of the balloon were killed when a missile caused their hydrogen-filled balloon to explode.

The pilots of a second balloon left the country before any problems arose, but authorities detained the pilots of the third balloon for a day before releasing them. The Belarusian government issued an official apology for the shooting that accepted ‘a certain amount’ of blame but nevertheless tried to justify the military's response. Many people were convinced that this would not be the last manifestation of Belarus's Cold War mentality.”



b. Russian ties “In both Belarus and Moldova, there are many who wish to return to the days of the Soviet Union for a variety of reasons, some economic, some nostalgic, and some fearful. In Belarus these conservatives (ethnic Belarusians as well as ethnic Russians) are in the majority and are to be found

throughout the population and the government. Their domination is felt not only in the political arena but in the social sphere as well...



Belarus's president, Alyaksandr Lukashyenka, and his government continued their pro-Russian policies and their Soviet-era mentality. When Orthodox Patriarch Aleksey II of Moscow and All Russia visited Belarus in July [1995], Lukashyenka praised the Orthodox Church while reproaching the Roman Catholic Church for its active proselytizing and politicking.

When subway workers in Minsk went on strike in August, the government sent special police units and Ministry of Interior troops against them. In addition, Lukashyenka reacted angrily to information that United States and Polish trade unions, including Solidarity, were providing financial assistance to the striking workers through Belarusian nongovernmental unions.

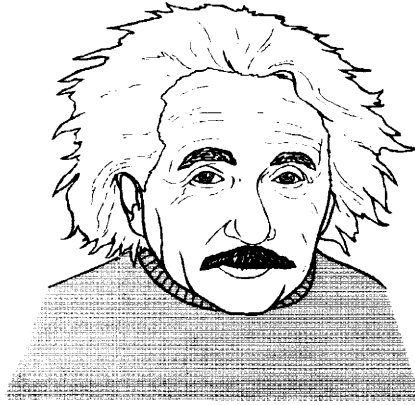
Also in August (1995), the president ordered that books published in 1992-95 be removed from secondary schools and institutes of higher education. In other words, these schools would return to using Soviet textbooks."

c. Legal ties A pact signed on 2 April 1996 linked Belarus and Russian political and economic systems. New accords, signed in spring of 1997, tightened these ties even further.

On 25 Dec 1998, President Lukashyenka of Belarus and President Yeltsin of Russia signed an accord

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proposing plans to unify Russian and Belarusian rubles, enact identical customs regulations, agree on measures to protect domestic industries and standardize regulations on monopolies like electrical utilities. President Lukashenko said "he hoped that the two countries would enter the millennium as one" (New York Times, 26 Dec. 1998, p. A1).



"Use all of your brain."

Vocabulary List: Historical Overview--Belarus

Collectivization Soviet policy of breaking up small farms and gathering all workers into collectives or massive agricultural projects.

Dissident One who goes against set policy or government, often at peril of their life.

Kalinowski, Kastus (1838-64) Called by many the father of Belorussian nationalism, he led a failed insurrection against Russia in 1863.

New Economic Policy Lenin's economic plans of 1921-28. In this temporary compromise with capitalism, some economic recovery occurred.

Polatsk (PAH-lahtsk) Located some 120 miles north northwest of Minsk, this city became the nucleus of modern-day Belarus

Polonize The forced acculturation of Polish ways upon the peoples of Belarus.

Riga, Treaty of (1921) Division of Belorussia into a western portion (absorbed into Poland), central region (Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and eastern portion (becoming part of Russia).

Russification The forced acculturation of Russian ways upon the peoples of Belarus.

Uniate Catholic Church (YOO-nee-at) Church formed at the Union of Brest. Uniates recognized the pope in Rome but kept traditional Orthodox ritual.

Review Quiz: Historical Overview--Belarus

Part 1--Fill in the Blanks Fill in the blanks with the most correct word from the list that follows. Not all words listed will be used.



(1) _____, a city 120 miles north by north east of Minsk, is the city which became the "nucleus of modern-day Belarussia." After the Tartar overthrow of Kiev in 1240, (2) _____ exerted control over the Belarussian region.

The (3) _____ Catholic Church acknowledges the Pope in Rome yet retains traditional Eastern Orthodox rites and customs. The (4) _____ established the Uniate Church.

(5) _____ was the process whereby Russians sought to change the nation identity of non-Russians to one similar to theirs.

An insurrectionist leader, active in the mid 1800s, who is now considered a founding father of Belarussian nationalism, was (6) _____.

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The Treaty of (7) _____, in 1921, divided Belarussia into the Polish Belarussian Soviet Socialist Republic (Belarussian SSR), and Russian sections.

Vladimir Lenin's (8) _____ (1921-28) allowed some local level capitalist ventures. (9) _____, the reunification of the people and culture under Stalin, effectively wiped out the NEP.

After Perestroika, the term "cultural (10) _____" described concern that Belarussian culture would face "spiritual extinction."

Polatsk	Estonia	Union of Brest
Uniate	Poland	Union of Lublin
Roman	Lithuania	Kalinowski
Russification	HOO-AH!	Riga
Fidel Castro	Lech Walesa	New Economic Policy (NEP)
Stalinization	Chernobyl	



Part 2--Multiple Choice Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

1. _____ Within 17th century Belarus, the Orthodox and Uniate Churches often
 - a. shared the same pastors and prayerbooks.
 - b. engaged in bitter struggles.
 - c. sought independence from any nationalist control.
2. _____ Polonization refers to
 - a. efforts made by Polish, Russian and Belarusian leadership to strengthen ties between the three countries, leading to their future growth.
 - b. the process of imposing Polish culture on non-Polish peoples.
 - c. the development of the sport of polo within Belarus and Great Britain.
3. _____ During the period 1906-18, Belarus experienced
 - a. increased bans on its distinct literature, language and culture.
 - b. a flowering of national and cultural interests.
 - c. many strikes and riots over the high price of foods.
4. _____ Under Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1921-28,
 - a. most business activity in Belarus ground to a standstill.
 - b. small businesses flourished and economic recovery took place.
 - c. forced collectivization took place with a resulting stability in the Belarusian countryside.

Unit 5: Historical Overview--Belarus

5. _____ One result of Moscow's policy of forced collectivization within Belarus was that
- a. farmers received new John Deere tractors to work the new collectives.
 - b. cattle numbers increased by 50% as there was much more efficient grazing room.
 - c. heavy industry came rapidly to the Belarus region.
6. _____ Belarus population losses, due to political persecutions in the 1930s under Stalin, approached _____ citizens.
- a. 20,000
 - b. 200,000
 - c. 2 million
7. _____ During World War II, Belarus
- a. was spared much destruction due to her neutral position.
 - b. became devastated due to guerrilla war, occupation, executions of Jewish citizens and movements of war fronts through the area.
8. _____ After all the World War II devastation, Stalin purged and deported Belarusian citizens. He also introduced
- a. new, up-to-date factories and plants in the region.
 - b. Moscow-trained Belorussian security police within key leadership positions.
 - c. methods whereby Belarusian language could experience a significant rebirth.
9. _____ The Chernobyl disaster of 26 April 1986 had
- a. little effect on Belarus as winds bore radiation to Europe rather than into the country.
 - b. tremendous negative impact on much of Belarus due to its close location to the Ukraine.
 - c. impact primarily on students and writers in Belarus. Most others just continued with their business.

10. _____ The 1988 discovery of mass graves near Minsk, many of whom were victims of Stalin's purges, led to

- a. criminal trials in the Hague, Netherlands.
- b. demands for societal reform and denunciations of Russian oversight.
- c. political renewal and increased awareness of the dangers of Soviet/Russian ties.



"In 1965, I was crippled and I was all alone (in a North Vietnamese prison). I realized that they had all the power. I couldn't see how I was ever going to get out with my honor and self-respect. The one thing I came to realize was that if you don't lose your integrity you can't be had and you can't be hurt. Compromises multiply and build up when you're working against a skilled extortionist or manipulator. You can't be had if you don't take that first shortcut, of 'meet them halfway, as they say, or look for that tacit deal, or make that first compromise."

Admiral James B. Stockdale,
inside cover, United States Air Force Values



Resources for Further Study: Historical Overview--Belarus

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